Headless

A 5e Player Race by DM Tuz

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Headless

"Like our heads, we carry the weight of an ancient crime."

The Headless are an enigmatic and rare people who bear the scar of a long-forgotten sin. Their existence is marked by an everlasting punishment, a cosmic sentence passed down through generations. A punishment delivered upon their ancestor whose actions demanded this absolute retribution—a beheading so profound in its purpose that its mark remains tethered to their lineage. Though no concrete records survived to shed light on the nature of this ancestor's crime, it is said to be one of unspeakable betrayal or corruption. Regardless of the truth, its reality endures and manifests in the Headless themselves

The Headless are a haunting sight, most recognizable by their defining characteristic: their severed heads, which are still alive and fully functioning and the mark of their forefather's sin. This severed head is commonly carried under the arm or securely fastened to the neck of the Headless individual. The Headless understand all too well that losing it entirely could bring about terrible consequences and thus guard their heads vigilantly. Therefore, unsurprisingly, trying to steal or harm a Headless' head is to invoke their ire . Born under the weight of an ancient curse, they bear an innate gloom—a shadow draped over every thought and deed, leaving them somber and prone to haunting ruminations on fate and loss.

Both their proclivity to introspection and the looming shadow of their curse draws them to mysteries, forbidden knowledge, and arcane secrets; the pull of the occult to the Headless is ever so alluring. Perhaps they have a subconscious desire to uncover their origin's mystery, understand their forefather's sin, or find a way to lift their curse. However, not all Headless see the curse as something that should be removed. Even though the weight of their legacy haunts each Headless, the ways in which they choose to carry this burden are numerous.

Dullahan
Artwork by Ceehaz

The Lost Sin

The Lost Sin is a deeply ingrained tale in the collective memory of the Headless, serving as a constant reminder of the crime that led to the curse they must carry. The specifics of the ancestor's actions have faded over time, shrouded in uncertainty and speculation. Some believe this figure was a warrior seeking to slay death itself and thus incited cosmic wrath upon their lineage. Others suggest a betrayal so profound that it demanded punishment too large to be endured by their ancestor alone. Whatever the crime may have been, its impact was severe enough that it reached beyond the ancestor's life and branded their descendants, the Headless, with an enduring mark of sin.

Headless communities speak of the Lost Sin as both a curse and a cautionary tale. Many Headless, in a show of devotion or remorse, adopt rituals of penance with the hope that their suffering may one day alleviate the burden of the curse for future bloodlines. These Headless commit themselves to service, frequently assuming roles that involve safeguarding or advising others, seeing their burden as a warning to resist pride, ambition, and treachery. Others, however, see the curse as unjust, an inherited punishment they had no part in and for which they seek liberation. These Headless embrace the unknown, turning to the arcane arts and forbidden lore, hoping to decipher the mysteries surrounding their origins and perhaps find a way to free themselves from their curse.

The Lost Sin, therefore, is more than an origin tale for the Headless; it is a moral dilemma that shapes the lives of every individual born under the curse. Whether they accept the punishment as deserved or strive to escape it, the weight of the Lost Sin remains with them, binding them to one another in shared suffering and mystery. And though their paths may diverge, every Headless feels the ghostly grip of the past upon them, pulling them toward the enigma that defines their people.

Headless Traits

As a Headless, you possess innate traits and capabilities.

Ability Score Increase. Increase one ability score by 2 and increase a different one by 1, or increase three different ability scores by 1.

Creature Type. Your creature type is humanoid.

Size. Your size is Medium.

Speed. You have a walking speed of 30 feet.

Languages. You can speak, read, and write Common, and another language of your choice.

Headless. Decapitation cannot kill you. Additionally, you have advantage on saving throws against being blinded or deafened. Only a Wish can return your head. If the spell Reincarnation or a similar spell changes your race, your new race gains the **Headless** and **Dullahan's Curse** traits.

Curseborn. You are resistant to necrotic damage.

Subraces. Choose one of the following subraces: Dullahan, Gan Caenn, or Object Head.

Dullahan

The Dullahan are the most iconic and common of the Headless, burdened to carry their own severed heads, which they guard with a near-obsessive vigilance. Known for their somber demeanor and unyielding resolve, they protect their heads from harm, for a terrible fate befalls any who lose this vital piece of themselves. Dullahans are drawn to isolated paths, moving with a ghostly grace, and are often accompanied by an aura of foreboding. Though they carry the weight of their curse, some take pride in their endurance after decades of an endured burden. To witness a Dullahan is to see the Headless curse embodied—a hardened figure bound by their own history.

Dullahan's Curse. Your head is not attached to your neck and is a tiny object that typically weighs 10 lbs. You must either hold your head in an empty hand or have it fastened to your neck. If you are not holding your head in your hand, it is considered an item you carry. You are always aware of where your head is if it is within 120 ft. of yourself. If it is further than 120 ft. away from you, you know the general direction of where your head is as long as it is on the same plane of existence as you are.

You continue to speak, see, and hear through your head, and potions can be consumed either by your body or your head. You can cast spells through your head as if you were in its position if you are within 100 ft. of one another. If the spell requires only vocal components, there is no limit to that range. If you don't carry or hold your head, it can become targets for attacks. Its AC is equal to 10+ your proficiency bonus. Any damage dealt to your head is dealt to you, and any effect that targets your head targets you, as if you were the same entity. If the area of an effect targets both you and your head, you are only affected by one instance of the effect.

Dullahan Ward. As long as you hold your head in one of your hands along with a weapon or spell focus that is not a shield, you gain a +1 bonus to your AC and dexterity saving throws. If you carry your head this way, it is considered a shield.

Howling Head. When you take the attack action on your turn, you can replace one of your attacks with launching your head at a target within 30 ft. of yourself. The target must succeed a dexterity saving throw or take 1d6 + your proficiency bonus cold, fire, or necrotic damage and your next attack roll before the end of your next turn against the target has advantage. The DC is equal to 8 + your Constitution modifier + your proficiency bonus. After the attack, your head magically returns back into your hand. When you gain this trait, choose which damage type your howling head deals. To use this action, you must either hold or carry your head. You can use this action an amount of times equal to your proficiency bonus before you have to finish a long rest to use it again.

Jock. You are proficient in Athletics or Persuasion.

Gan Caenn
Artwork by Ceehaz

Gan Caenn

The Gan Caenn are what become of a Dullahan when they lose their head, embodying the fate most dreaded among the Headless. Stripped of their head, a Gan Caenn's neck becomes a source of raw, accursed energy, and often plunged into madness. Those struck by the initial mania are driven to uncontrollable rampages, hunting relentlessly in a desperate attempt to replace their lost head. The Gan Caenn's frenzied search leaves a trail of chaos in their wake, with every decapitation an echo of the loss that spurns them.

However, not all Gan Caenn are claimed by this madness indefinitely. Some regain their senses or might avoid this madness alltogether, though their existence remains forever altered. These lucid Gan Caenn, now teetering between a close line between life and death, experience life in a muted state, their senses dulled and emotions perpetually dimmed. Their depressive state becomes a constant companion, pressing them into a somber solitude. The only relief from this shadowy haze comes through acts of violence: with each life they take, a brief surge of vitality and clarity flows through them, lifting this haze for a fleeting moment. But this release carries a danger of its own, for overindulgence can drive them back into a frenzy for more, triggering the very mania they fear.

In this delicate balance, the Gan Caenn must carefully restrain their violent impulses, lest they spiral back into the Headless rage they escaped. Haunted and restrained, they live as shadows of their former selves, cursed to wander this most delicate of lines.

Reaping. When you hit a creature with an attack you can deal an additional 1d6 necrotic damage. Once you do so, you can't use this trait again until you have finished a Short or Long rest. The first time in a turn a creature within 30 ft. of yourself dies you gain a bonus use of this trait until the end of your next turn. You can only have one bonus use of this trait at a time.

Undying. When you are reduced to 0 hit points, you can choose to not fall unconscious. You still make death saving throws at the end of your turn. As soon as you fail one death saving throw, you fall unconscious. While you are dying and not unconscious, you have disadvantage on attack rolls and can't use reactions. If another creature within 30 ft. of yourself dies while you are dying, you regain 1 hit point at the end of your next turn.

Melancholic. You are proficient in History or Insight.

Don't Lose your Head!

As an optional rule you can choose to add another layer of threat for your Dullahan character: the danger of losing your head. Your character's head can be either destroyed or lost for good. In that case your Dullahan Headless would transform into a Gan Caenn Headless. When your character transforms, they lose all traits they gained through their subrace except for their skill proficiency (and feats exclusively available to their subrace) and gain the Gan Caenn's **Reaping** and **Undying** trait (any feats you list can be replaced by feats that you qualify for).

You can lose your head in the following ways:

Damage. If an effect or attack targets your head (without including your body) and deals an amount of damage equal or higher than your maximum hit points, roll a d20: on a 9 or lower, your head is destroyed and lost.

Misplacement. If you lose possession of your head and do not reclaim and touch your head before the next new moon (or within 28 days) your head is lost. When your head is lost it immediately decomposes into a skull.

Cosmic Separation. If you head lingers on another plane of existence from your body for more than 24 hours, your head is lost. When your head is lost it immediately decomposes into a skull.

Reclaiming Your Head

If your Headless character ever were to lose their head (see Don't Lose Your Head!) or want to offer a Gan Caenn Headless character an opportunity to gain a new head, consider the following options:

Quest For Your Head. When you lose your original head, its decrepid remains still exist. If you manage to find your once lost head and perform a ritual (the nature of the ritual is up to the Dungeon Master's discretion) you reclaim your head and you transform into a Dullahan Headless, replacing your subrace traits with the Dullahan traits and choosing a new feat if you had a feat exclusive to the Gan Caenn subrace.

Wish. You use the Wish spell or call upon other divine intervention to grant you a new head and transform you into a Dullahan Headless (as discribed in Quest for Your Head)

Object Replacement. You heed the call of the Object Head and replace your head with a suitable object. You must bind with this object over the course of an uninterrupted 1 hour ritual during a new moon. At the end of that ritual you transform into an Object Head, replacing your subrace traits with the Object Head traits and choosing a new feat if you had a feat exclusive to the Gan Caenn subrace.

Check out these other Player Races!
Aside from the Living Weapons, I also have created many other monster girl inspired player races such as the *Lamia*, ambitious snake folk who are so often misunderstood, and the *Holstaur*, the gentle giants who traverse the land to foster the meak.

Object Head

Object Heads are headless who, in order to bypass their curse, have chosen to substitute their original heads with objects—a practice both peculiar and relatively unknown. This process, though seemingly freeing, is not without its price. By attaching an object in place of their missing head, they create only a superficial fix rather than true release from the curse's hold. Despite the appearance of success, cosmic retribution seems to exact a toll on their minds, leading many to develop strange eccentricities like obsessions with specific objects or irrational fears, or even madness marked by hallucinations and delusions. A significant number of Object Heads slip into barely functional states, their minds fractured by the strain of bending their curse.

Yet, for some Headless, the lure of freedom outweighs the risk of mental degradation, and they take on their new form with acceptance, if not defiance. Those who retain a grip on sanity often find themselves oddities even among their kin, marked by unusual mannerisms and peculiar outlooks. Shunned by some and merely tolerated by others, they wander as loners and hermits, following whims and inspirations that appear as strange as the objects they bear for heads.

These surviving Object Heads become drifters, guided by fleeting curiosities and esoteric pursuits, venturing wherever their fancies lead. In their peculiar way, they transcend their curse, but at the price of perpetual estrangement from both society and the stability of their own minds.

Replacement Head. Your head has been replaced with an object. Over the course of an uninterrupted Short Rest you can replace your head with another object, which is then magically bound to the stump of your neck. The object must weigh 2 or more pounds and be reasonably large enough to serve as a replacement head (at the Dungeon Master's discretion). Even without visible orfices, you can see, hear, smell, and speak through the object that replaces your head. If you are decapitated, you must replace your missing head with an object. Until you do so, you are blinded and deafened for the duration.

Weird Magics. You learn the Color Spray spell and can cast it once, requiring no material components, and regain the ability to do so when you finish a long rest. When you gain this trait choose whether Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma is your spellcasting ability for this spell. Whenever you are bloodied and can use a reaction to cast Color Spray using this trait.

Optional Rule: Instead of Color Spray, you can learn another 1st level spell that requires an action to cast that matches the the object you used to replace your head (at the Dungeon Master's discretion). For example, using a tea kettle to replace your head would allow you to learn Fog Cloud instead, as steam would emerge from the spout. If you replace your head with another object, you then must change your spell to another if it no longer fits the object.

Weird Mind. You are resistant to psychic damage and have advantage on saving throws against effects that read your mind or otherwise invade it.

Eccentric. You are proficient in Arcana or Deception.

Object Head
Artwork by Ceehaz

Eccentricities

Object Heads are notorious for their peculiar quirks, often shaped by the strange influence of their chosen head. To add unique flavor to your Object Head character, roll on the table below and discover an eccentricity that reflects their unconventional nature. Each result offers a glimpse into the unusual behaviors and obsessions that set Object Heads apart and offer more flavor to add to your Object Head.

Object Head Eccentricities

d6	Eccentricities
1	You tend to treat inanimate objects like they're living beings, assigning them names, feelings, and personalities.
2	You commonly end your sentences with an onomatopoeia related to your head.
3	You often stop mid-conversation to adjust or "fix" your object head, like repositioning it or cleaning it.
4	When adressing people you often accidentally speak to a nearby object, mistaking it for them.
5	When excited you like to chant terms related to your object head.
6	You frequently spout random, obscure facts about objects similar to your head.

Headless Unique Feats

Headless characters have access to unique feats when they level up in a class. Some DMs allow the use of feats to further customize a character, see chapter 6, "Customization Options", of the Player's Handbook.

The following special feats allow your character to expand upon their innate abilities, as each feat represents an evolution of your character's nature and traits.

Mark of the Sinner

Prerequisite: Headless (Dullahan), Level 4+

Through intuition or research, you have inched closer to the truth behind the Lost Sin. As you approach the truth of your ancestor's deeds ever so slightly, your curse changed and began to... empower you out of all things? You gain the following boons:

Ability Score Increase. Increase one ability score by 1, to a maximum of 20.

Cranium Catapult. The range of your Howling Head trait is increased by 60 ft.

Flying Head. Your head has a flying speed of 30 ft. and on your turn you can move your head up to its flying speed. As an action you can double the distance your head can move until the end of your turn and it can move without provoking opportunity attacks. Your head cannot move further than 60 ft. away from you with this movement.
When you are within 60 ft. of your head, you can use an Action or Bonus Action to magically conjure your head into your hand.

Floating Dodge. Your head now adds your Dexterity or Con modifier to its AC and no longer automatically fails Strength and Dexterity saving throws. When it is forced to make a Strength or Dexterity saving throw, it uses your statistics.

Headhunter

Prerequisite: Headless (Gan Caenn), Level 4+

After experiencing the Gan Caenn's madness yourself and overcoming it, you learned to harness its power. You channel the thirst for heads against your foes to turn you into a lethal and resilient combatant. You gain the following boons:

Ability Score Increase. Increase one ability score by 1, to a maximum of 20.

Life Drinker. Your Reaping trait's additional damage increases by another 1d6 (2d6 total) if your target is bloodied (below half its maximum hit points).
Additionally If you use your Reaping trait and kill a creature with the attack, you can gain an amount of temporary hit points equal to the additional necrotic damage dealt which fade at the end of your next turn.

Relentless Pursuit. Whenever your Undying Trait triggers, you gain a bonus use of your Reaping trait until the end of your next turn.

Mark of the Sinner
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Mooncalf Logic

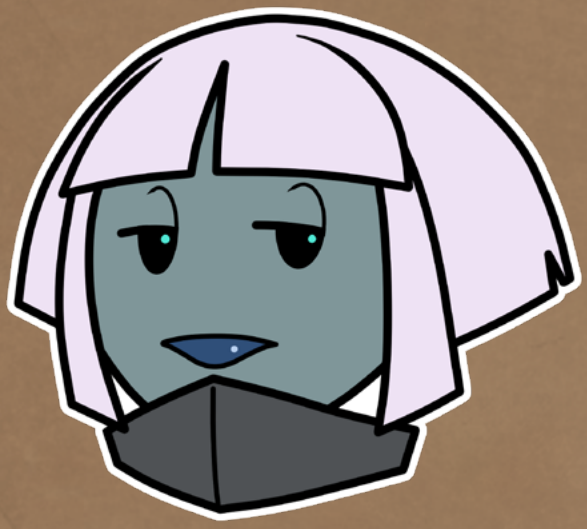
Prerequisite: Headless (Object Head), Level 4+

As your mind adjusts the push and pull between your peculiar head and your curse, you not only tap deeper into the unexpected power resulting from this interaction, you unlocked a strange new perspective. You harness the dissonant thoughts and logic that come with your new head to view the world through an unorthodox gaze. With whimsy, mystery, and a touch of madness, you perceive what lies beyond the ordinary, sensing what others overlook or cannot understand. You gain the following boons:

Ability Score Increase. Increase one ability score by 1, to a maximum of 20.

Even Weirder Magics. You can cast the spell granted to you by your Weird Magics trait an amount of times equal to your proficiency modifier before you have to finish a long rest to use it again. Additionally, whenever you finish a short rest you regain one expended use of your Werid Magics trait.

Harness the Werid. Once per turn when you fail an Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma saving throw, you can expend a use of your Weird Magics trait to add 1d6 to the result, possibly turning a failure into a success.
Alternatively, when you make an Insight, Investigation, or Perception check, you can expend a use of your Weird Magics trait to add 1d6 to the result.



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